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ORG 1: OAS

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Cuba

I+5 7-06 Argentina

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Comment:

Coups Peril 3 Nations as OAS Meets

By VIRGINIA PREWETT

Threat of three new military coups hangs over Latin America. And the outcome of the current Organization of American States meeting here in Washington on Cuban subversion will undoubtedly influence the Latin military's decision to move.

Argentina, Chile and, almost unbelievably, Uruguay, are the countries in the shadow of military take-overs.

HARD TIME

Argentina in 1962 experienced military intervention, out of which came an elected government ostensibly dedicated to democracy. But hard-core Peronism and communism are giving the government of President Arturo Illia a hard time over inflation. The Peronist-communist drive is actually aimed at national control.

Dr. Illia still has to make a resolute stand against the Peronist-communist onslaught. Meanwhile, Castro-supported guerrillas are harassing the Argentina gendarmerie in Argentina's northwest corner.

Argentina's president has said his government wants "hemispheric unanimity" in dealing with Venezuela's indictment of Cuba for subversion. This can mean much or little. It can mean Argentina will urge Bolivia and Uruguay, its small neighbors now hanging back on the indictment, to strengthen their stand. Or it can mean support for the two in their intransigence.

The latter course will feed the determination of the sectors of the Argentina Army opposing the Peronist-communist partnership to take over again.

Chile's situation is tragic.

With a strong Socialist-Communist presidential candidate running for election in September, even the democratic forces of Chile are afraid to urge strong Chilean action against Cuba. This, in turn, serves as an argument among the military that the extreme left has effectively neutralized democracy in Chile. It will weigh in favor of a coup.

Uruguay, once South America's model democracy, is suffering from extreme political stagnation, due largely to its 'colleagite' form of government. It is ruled by a Council of Nine, each in turn serving as president. The nine are widely divided in personal loyalties and have brought Uruguay's government to a virtual standstill trying to carve up power and patronage among themselves.

NEAR PARALYSIS

The stagnation approaches total paralysis in some areas as various factions in the Uruguayan Congress refuse to pass legislation because of petty political treacheries among the ruling nine.

While this disgusts Uruguay's men of action, Uruguay suffers a reflected economic stagnation because Argentina, to which it is closely tied economically, is not going ahead.

Uruguay's military men, the outstanding in the hemisphere for their traditional devotion to democracy, are growing impatient. Uruguay's failure to act against Communist Cuba with the hemisphere majority at the meeting here will undoubtedly strengthen their moral justification for a coup.